

Guidance on Critical Thinking Courses in the Arts/Humanities Category of OT36

Many institutions offer introductory courses on informal logic (for example, Introduction to Critical Thinking) in their general education programs. These courses, while often housed in philosophy departments, may take a different approach than other philosophy courses in the Arts/Humanities OT36, especially in terms of the three learning outcomes that require student interaction with primary sources.

- **Textual Analysis:** a wide variety of primary sources may fulfill this OT36 Arts/Humanities outcome. Primary sources might include writings of philosophers on the subject of logic, but also philosophical arguments on other topics, texts from other disciplines that allow students to analyze arguments, and other types of primary sources to which students can apply critical thinking skills through a process of close textual analysis.
- **Contextual Examination:** the faculty panel looks for evidence that students are considering the circumstances surrounding texts, so that textual analysis doesn't occur in a solely formal manner. Critical thinking courses should encourage students to place primary sources in historical and/or cultural contexts.
- **Breadth:** courses in the OT36 Arts/Humanities category should address a range of primary source materials to avoid an excessively narrow focus, though that range may be chronological, cultural, and/or geographical. Approved courses should require students to think comparatively about humanistic traditions.

The Arts/Humanities component of OT36 excludes courses that are primarily designed for skill development, rather than emphasizing the approved Arts/Humanities general education outcomes. Courses in symbolic or formal logic may be considered for inclusion in the Mathematic, Statistics & Logic section of OT36.